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## RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

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**W**HAT NEWS OF PHILIP? So in the language of apathy and desolative security the Athenians spent their time in fruitless inquiries, while the conqueror of Greece consolidated his power, and pursued his measures of

tyranny. In vain was the manly eloquence of Demosthenes exerted to arouse this people—"O Athenians, make news for Philip."

*Inhabitants of the British Isles, make news for Bonaparte!* Reform at home, and you most effectually frustrate the plans of the conqueror of continental Europe. Cease the cowardly and unmannerly abuse of him, and defeat him by the only means which perhaps are left; and shew him that Liberty, the imperishable spirit of Freedom, can set his power and his legions at defiance. We have been too tardy in opposing him by this powerful engine, and we have too long, and, it is feared, too fatally given way to an ungenerous suspicion against our best ally, and most firm support. Unite at home; concede nobly and frankly to all sects, seek not strength in the bonds of corruption and influence, but in the reformation of abuses, and the too long delayed correction of defects. It is vain to abuse the modern Philip for abridging the liberty of the press, and to waste our eloquence declaiming against the restrictions which allow only one shackled and muzzled press at Frankfort. Let us look at home, for there "a groan of accusation pierces heaven." The virtuous Wakefield suffered under two years imprisonment in Dorchester gaol. The editor and publisher of the Independent Whig are now undergoing a three years imprisonment, a large portion of a man's life to be cut off from the enjoyments of the open air. Cobbett is in Newgate, and Gale Jones and Peter Finney are on the point of receiving sentence. Yet if a man complains, our courtly editors of a venal or timid press call such complaints the language of party, and secure in their own more than suspicious neutrality, are indifferent to the well-grounded complaints of the people. But what means this contemptuous affectation of calling out a party? Are not the administrators of the powers of government often a party, and a small party, strong only because they are in possession of the purse of the nation, and the patronage of office. When opposed to the people they are a party, and not unfrequently a faction, and all the evils of party spirit, and of faction, are by them inflicted on the nation. It is absurd in the extreme to denominate all who oppose their encroachments as agents of

party; it is too common an abuse of language arising with some from a desire to cloak their own dishonest and cowardly conduct, and in others from an indiscriminating adoption of set phrases, without examining their import. Many thus fall into a *cant* of expression, and praise or censure according to the modishness of the times. A sagacious observer of events for the last thirty years must have observed many changes of fashionable opinion in that time, and the names of things have changed while their nature remained unaltered. It would be curious to see a dictionary of fashionable opinions, which would convey an exact impression of every annual change, published once a year as an almanack or court calendar. Many men might then behold as in a mirror the phases of their minds.

In a retrospect which professes in some measure

———— "To shew  
"The very age and body of the time,  
"Its form and pressure,"

It may be proper to note the Stamford Ghost. In the nineteenth century, in England which calls itself enlightened, a scene of imposture has been practised, and credit given to it by a grave clergyman, a man by courtesy supposed to be of superior information, who has written two pamphlets in support of the credibility by a house being haunted by a supernatural noise, at Stamford, in England. This trick of the noise is evidently for some interested purpose, which common sense, and a little exertion might soon detect. The circumstance is unworthy of notice in any other point of view, than as marking the times in no very honourable characters. Such things are not credited merely among the vulgar, but let us remember that learning and wisdom are not synonymous, while men of learning lend an easy ear to those stories of grovelling superstition. In Ireland, even in Ulster, we have had our ghost stories, and houses haunted by noises. When such tales find an admittance among the higher classes, who from their superior advantages ought to be the best informed, the present age must admit of many drawbacks on their claims to the higher advances in civilization.

If the *bedarkeners* had their way uncensured, and uncontroled, we should speedily return again to the darkness of the middle ages, and the human intellect would once more be retrogressive into ignorance, and barbarism.

The report of the committee of the House of Commons on sinecures, part of which was given among the documents, in the last number, and the remainder in the present, affords some curious information as to the mode of disposing of the public money, and lays open to view one cause of the burdens of the people. A hive is not in a thriving state when it is infested with many drones. Economical reform is essentially wanting, but a party of economical reformists wish to represent it the sole remedy for all the evils of our state. As a branch of reform, it would be of great advantage, but of itself its efficacy would be very small. We have not only to look for a present alleviation of public abuses, but such a radical reform, as would effectually prevent their repetition. Otherwise it is of small importance whether we read Grenville or Percival as first lord of the treasury. They both and their relations hold many sinecures. Parliamentary reform can alone serve us. Compromises are always hurtful to the interests of the people, who suffer by a coalition of leaders, and the neutralizing of principles.

The Catholics of Ireland have at their last meeting resolved to petition parliament in the ensuing session. At this meeting we heard no repetition of the extravagant hyperbole of preferring a repeal of the Union to a removal of the Penal Statutes.

Doubts had prevailed as to the propriety of petitioning, but at this meeting, held in Dublin on the 2d inst. the motives for petitioning very properly preponderated, from the considerations that the discussions in parliament had a strong tendency to enlighten the public mind, on the justice and good policy of laying aside all disqualifications on account of religious distinctions, and because that latterly the people of England have altered their sentiments and practice very considerably towards the liberal

side. In the course of the debate it was urged with great propriety, that a distinction should be made between the people of England and the members of administration: that although the latter, and probably some of those who are striving to be their successors, are deficient in enlarged and liberal views, yet that hence no jealousy should be permitted to insinuate itself between Englishmen and Irishmen, nor should censure be indiscriminately thrown, as has been too commonly done, on the British nation for the errors of its rulers. In both countries a common ground of complaint exists, and united efforts to promote reform should take place of all illiberal jealousies and prejudices against each other. The happiness and prosperity of both countries would be essentially promoted by a joint co-operation to procure a removal of those grievances, which prove equally injurious both to Britain and Ireland. It is necessary to discriminate between a nation and its government, and leaving all minor considerations it would be magnanimous in Ireland to bury all old grudges, and join with their brethren in Britain in seeking for a parliamentary reform, and the removal of disqualifications on account of religion, as the only effectual means of removing former causes of dissatisfaction between the countries, and ensuring their common safety. Thus united on the solid basis of a substantial reform, they would have little to fear from their external enemies, while dissension and disunion may lead to great dangers.

It is probable that Catholic Emancipation will at no very distant period be conceded to the just demands and increasing liberality of the times. The disqualifications of Protestant Dissenters should then also be urged. In England the test laws most essentially abridge their liberty. On the broad basis of universal liberty of conscience many impediments are yet to be removed. Dissenters have for some years remained inactive, discouraged by the failure of their former attempts and the unfavourableness of the times for the admission of just claims. But may we not be allowed to anticipate the removal

of the black clouds of prejudice, which our superstitious horror of the French revolution, and our ungenerous jealousy of freedom have occasioned? The venerable Christopher Wyvill and some other liberal members of the establishment have set the example of bringing forward the claims of dissenters in their petition to the last session of parliament. Dissenters should second these generous efforts, and not supinely relinquish the cause of religious liberty.

Last year we praised the Associate Anti-Burgher Synod of Seceders of Ireland, for refusing to receive the Regium Donum. Alas! this year we have to record their acceptance of it. Such too often is the progress of temptation!

“For when too long familiar with her face,

“We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

The Regium Donum, or bounty for the dissenting clergy, may be considered as an insidious plan to stifle struggling patriotism, and to reduce to the tameness of submission.

The Spanish Cortes have after a long debate and much opposition decreed in favour of the liberty of the press. The prejudices of theological intolerance and of civil despotism were leagued against it, lest the people should be enlightened to seek their rights, by increasing the powers of the mind in judging of their spiritual concerns beyond the narrow limits of prescribed routine, and by resisting the oppressions of their ecclesiastical and civil rules. The Cortes have been engaged in forming a new regency, and have rejected one of the proposed regents, the Marquis del Palachio, for refusing to take the oath in the prescribed form; but their proceedings are communicated to us in such scraps, and we are so little acquainted with the leading characters, that no accurate judgment can as yet be formed of their proceedings, or whether they have the power or the inclination to save their country from the grasp of French usurpation, by an exertion of the energies of freedom. Some of their members hold a determined tone, and speak in the accents of liberty. If such a disposition prevail, they may yet do much good.

The Ex king of Sweden has arrived

in England. He appears to have fallen a victim to his own unwise and rash counsels. Ambition operating on a weak mind, and a foolish affectation of aiming to copy the exploits of his renowned predecessors, Gustavus Vasa and Gustavus Adolphus, without a calculation of the diminished resources of Sweden, have led to the ruin of his fortunes. Some parts of his conduct appear inexplicable on the supposition of his mental sanity. We have never seen a satisfactory explanation of his conduct towards Sir John Moore.

The houses of Lords and Commons unexpectedly assembled on the 1st inst. in consequence of the incapacity of the King to affix his sign manual to the commission for proroguing the Parliament. An adjournment took place to the 15th to allow the members time to assemble, and on that day a further adjournment was carried by a large majority to the 29th. Ministers are not backward in manoeuvres and intrigue on the occasion of protracting the measures of declaring the King's incapacity, and proceeding to appoint the Prince of Wales regent, because they anticipate the loss of their places from such an event, and those who expect to be their successors stand aloof with affected coyness, eagerly wishing to step into their places, but also desirous to keep up the appearance of great moderation and forbearance. The many conduct of Sir Francis Burdett, in pressing the point to a decision by a vote disconcerted both parties. He urged the propriety of sitting with only adjournments from day to day to be ready to act as circumstances might render necessary in the present critical emergency. In this difficult conjuncture it is difficult to form even a wish as to the change of the ministry. A change of measures, not merely of men, can alone be the object of rational desire. The incapability and narrow illiberality of the present men are conspicuous, but in their probable successors some have not great confidence. Their superior talents are admitted, but the shreds and patches of the old Fox party in conjunction with the Grenvilles; the former coadjutors, and present praisers of “the Great Statesman, now no more,” do not furnish

cuted by deputy? No, I am aware of none at all, and the same answer must apply to the register of the high court of appeals; the register of the court of Delegates is a very trifling thing; I do not suppose his lordship has ever received 200l. from it.

Do these three offices always go together? They have always been in the same patent ever since I have known them.

Has Lord Arden any salary? No, he has not, the whole arises from fees.

*Thomas Carter, esq. called in and examined.*

You hold the office of Provost Marshal of Barbadoes? I do.

In what manner do you execute that office? Wholly by deputy.

Have you leave of absence? Yes, I have.

Did you go out to take possession? No, I did not.

*The Honourable Percy Wyndham, called in, and examined.*

You are register of chancery in the island of Jamaica, and secretary and clerk of the courts in Barbadoes? Yes, and also prothonotary of the court of common pleas, in Barbadoes.

Do you execute any part of the duties of those offices in person? I do not.

What are the emoluments which you derive from those offices? From the office of register of chancery 1,050l. from the office of Secretary of Barbadoes 700l. and from the office of Prothonotary of the Court of Common Pleas, on the average of six years, 16l. 13s. 4d. making together, 1,766l. 13s. 4d.

*The Hon. Chas. Wyndham, a member of the house, examined.*

You hold the office of secretary and clerk of the enrolments of Jamaica? I do.

Do you execute any of the duties in person? No, by deputy, and always have done.

What is the net receipt coming to you from that office? 2500l. a year; I was under agreement to receive so much from the person filling the duties of it, which became vacant about seventeen years ago, and then I received a bonus to continue it at the same

rate; to the best of my recollection it was 6 or 7000l. sterl. I received.

*The Rt. Hon. Wm. Bagwell, a member of the house, examined.*

You are one of the joint muster-masters of Ireland? I am.

Do you execute any part of that office in person? None whatever in person.

Are there any duties to be executed? Yes there are—it is a purely military office.

*Charles Grenville, esq. called in and examined.*

You are secretary to the island of Tobago? I am.

Is any part of the duties of that office performed by yourself in person?—No.

It is entirely performed by deputy? Yes.

Do you appoint the deputy yourself? Yes, subject to the approbation of the Governor.

What is the receipt you have from the office? 400l. net.

You are the naval officer of Demerara? I am.

What do you receive from that? It is uncertain; I ought to receive 500l. a year, but I receive about 250l. the deputy sends me two thirds.

What is the nature of the office of naval officer? I believe the fees arise from keeping a register of ships which come in and clear out.

*Thomas Lowten, esq. called in and examined.*

You execute the office of deputy to the clerk of the pipe? I do.

Does lord William Bentinck perform any part of the duties in person? No.

What is the salary that as deputy you receive? One hundred pounds a year.

And no other fees of any sort?—No other fees of any sort.

The emoluments of Lord William Bentinck are stated to amount net to 633l. is that correct? I should rather suppose that for the years 1806 1807, and 1808, the profits were as much as seven hundred and thirty, or seven hundred and forty pounds; but the last year has not been quite so much; but I take the average to be about seven hundred and forty

pounds, mine is a fixed salary of 100l. a year.

The labour of course is very small? It is very great; I undertook that office more out of regard to the late duke of Portland, than any view to emolument.

*John Dax, esq. called in, and examined.*

You are deputy to the Clerk of the exchequer of pleas? I am.

What duties does Mr. William S. Rose, perform in person, as clerk of the exchequer of pleas? None.

At no time? No.

Nor of any kind? No.

You execute the whole of the office? I do.

*The right honourable Thomas Steele, called in and examined.*

You are King's Remembrancer in the court of exchequer? I am.

Are the duties executed by yourself? No, by clerks.

You have no deputy? Yes I have; Mr. Moysey is my deputy.

How is the office executed? The duties of the office are executed by deputy.

Are you aware of any inconvenience that would result to the public from the office of King's remembrancer being abolished? Certainly, I cannot say that I am.

If the office of register were abolished, do you apprehend any inconvenience would result to the public? Certainly not; any office that is done by deputy may be abolished.

*Mr. Thos. Farrer, called in, and examined.*

You are deputy comptroller of the Pipe? Yes.

Are the duties executed by Mr. Tekell in person? No, he does no duties in person as comptroller of the pipe.

It is done wholly by deputy? By myself and my clerk.

*Mr. John Tekell, called in, and examined.*

Are you deputy in the office of the chirographer in the court of exchequer? I am.

That is an office held by patent? Yes, From whom is the patent? From the king.

You execute the duties of that office? I am secondary or deputy in the office.

The patentees perform no part of the duties in person? None,

What is the emolument derived by Sir Henry and Mr. Colebrook? I should apprehend about 400l. a year between them.

*Mr. Jas. Sayers, called in, and examined.*

You are marshal of the exchequer? I am.

Do you execute the duties of that office in person? No, entirely by deputy.

You have no duties whatever to perform but what are discharged by deputy? I perform no duties. If I had to take a person into custody for a very large sum of money, I might choose, to prevent accident, to do it myself.

But you might do it by deputy?— Yes.

How many years have you been in the office? Ever since the year 1784.

During that time have you ever performed any duties in person? I have not, except attending once, and *walking before Mr. Pitt, as chancellor of the exchequer.*

We have at length come to one great efficient officer. Here is a gentleman who at least does something for his money. He once walked in a procession before Mr. Pitt. Never to be sure was there exhibited a more shining example of a splendid government. We might search all Europe in vain for such munificence. We recollect, indeed, as far as the tale-telling Schekere-zade is good authority, an *Asiatic* example of similar liberality in the case of "Ganem, the son Abou Aïbou, or the slave of Love," who, on his first introduction at the levee to Haroun Al Raschid, *i.e.* Haroun the just or the pious; and after receiving a rich robe, according to the custom always observed to those to whom audience was given, is thus briefly addressed by that conscientious Caliph, "Ganem, I much wish you to remain at my court." "Commander of the faithful," replied the young merchant, "the slave has no other will than that of his master, on whom his life and fortune depend." The Caliph was well pleased with Ganem's answer, and gave him a large pension. After this the Prince descended from his throne.